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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
U.S. Food Distribution Administration

TENTATIVE U. S. STANDARDS FOR CLASSES AND GRADES FOR DRESSED CHICKENS

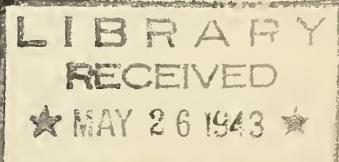
Tentative U. S. Classes for Dressed Chickens

According to Age, Sex, and Weight

- Young Birds: Broilers - Young chickens, approximately eight to twelve weeks old, of either sex, of marketable age, but not weighing over $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds and sufficiently soft meated to be cooked tender by broiling.
- Fryers - Young chickens, approximately thirteen to twenty weeks old, of either sex, weighing more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds, but not more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ pounds, and sufficiently soft meated to be cooked tender by frying.
- Roasters - Young chickens, approximately five to nine months old, of either sex, weighing over $3\frac{1}{2}$ pounds and sufficiently soft meated to be cooked tender by roasting.
- Stags - Young male birds of any weight, with flesh slightly darkened and toughened and with comb and spur development showing the bird to be in a state of maturity between roasting chickens and cocks.
- Capons - Unsexed male birds weighing over 4 pounds, usually seven to ten months old, and with soft and tender flesh.
- Old Birds: Fowl or Stewing Chickens - Mature female birds of any age or weight.
- Cocks - Mature male birds of any age or weight, with darkened and toughened flesh.

According to Method of Plucking, Dressing,
Finishing, Chilling, and Packing

- Plucking: Scalded - Chickens that have been immersed in scalding water before plucking, usually at a temperature of 170° to 180° F.
- Semi-Scalded - Chickens that have been immersed in hot water before plucking, usually at a temperature of 125° to 130° F.
- Dry-plucked - Chickens that have been plucked dry; that is, without immersing in water.



Dressing:	Drawn	- Chickens from which the entrails are removed.
	Undrawn	- Chickens from which the entrails are not removed.
Finishing:	Milk-fed	- Chickens with skin and flesh bleached by feeding milk in the ration and with muscle fiber softened by fatty deposits throughout the connective tissue. The usual period of milk-feeding is from six to ten days.
	Grain-fed	- Chickens that show no marked evidence of milk-feeding.
Chilling:	Fresh dressed	- Chickens that have not been hard chilled or frozen.
	Fresh hard-chilled	- Fresh dressed chickens that have been hard chilled or frozen, but have not developed any appearance of cold storage stock and show no evidence of deterioration from freezing and have not been held at low temperature for more than sixty days.
	Storage	- Chickens that have been held at a low temperature for more than sixty days or that show evidence of deterioration from freezing, regardless of length of time held.
Packing:	Dry	- Chickens that have been packed dry and cooled without ice coming into direct contact with the carcasses.
	Iced	- Chickens that have been packed in direct contact with ice.

Tentative U. S. Standards for Grades for Dressed Chickens

U. S. Grade AA	- Commercially perfect specimens of any class.
U. S. Grade A	- The second highest grade of dressed chickens.
U. S. Grade B	- The third highest grade of dressed chickens.
U. S. Grade C	- Edible dressed chickens below the grade of U. S. Grade B, except such as are specifically excluded by the general grading requirements or by the detailed specifications for U. S. Grade C.

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Specifications for Tentative U. S. Standards for Grades for Dressed Broilers, Fryers, and Roasters

U. S. Grades	Quality Specifications for Individual Birds
U.S. Grade AA	Young soft meated bird, full-fleshed, well bled, well dressed and free of pinfeathers. No flesh or skin bruises allowed and only slight skin abrasions or discolorations permitted, none of which shall be on the breast. Crooked breast or other deformities not allowed. A broken or disjoined wing above the wing tip or a broken or disjointed leg not permitted. No torn skin permitted whether sewn or not. The crop must be empty and clean. Must be dry picked or semi-scalded and dry packed.
U.S. Grade A	Young soft meated bird, well fleshed, well bled, well dressed, and practically free of pinfeathers. No flesh bruises except very slight on back or wings and only very slight skin bruises, abrasions or discolorations permitted, none of which shall be on the breast. Crooked breasts or other deformities not allowed. One broken wing above the wing tip permitted in broilers and fryers, if the bone does not protrude through the flesh and if there is no appreciable bruise or blood clot. Broken legs not permitted except that the shanks may be broken. Slight sewn tears permitted on the back and wings, but no sewn tears permitted on the breast or fleshy part of the carcass. Open tears not permitted. The crop must be empty and clean but an entire crop completely and properly removed through a small incision at the back or side of the neck permitted. Must be dry picked or semi-scalded.
U.S. Grade B	Young soft meated bird, fairly well fleshed. Must be fairly well dressed and fairly well bled. May show a few scattered pinfeathers over the entire carcass. Slight flesh or skin bruises, abrasions or discolorations permitted, but not more than three such defects, if on the breast. Abrasions over two inches in diameter not permitted and tears over two inches in diameter not allowed unless properly sewn. Dented or slightly crooked breast bone or other slight deformities permitted. One broken wing or one broken leg in the flesh permitted, if bone does not protrude through the flesh and if not showing excessive bruise or blood clot. The crop must be empty and clean, but an entire crop completely and properly removed permitted.
U.S. Grade C	Young bird, poorly fleshed. May show evidence of poor bleeding and have numerous pinfeathers over the entire carcass. Abrasions and discolorations permitted. Hunchback or other deformities allowed, if bird is fairly well fleshed. Bird badly bruised, so as to make an appreciable part of the carcass inedible, or bird showing evidence of disease or other condition that renders it unwholesome for human food not permitted.

Specifications for Tentative U. S. Standards for Grades for Dressed Capons, Stags and Cocks

Classes	U. S. Grade		Quality Specifications for Individual Birds
	U. S. Grade AA	U. S. Grade A	
Capon	Young caponized male bird, otherwise conforming to the specifications for U. S. Grade AA roaster.	Young caponized male bird, otherwise conforming to the specifications for U. S. Grade A roaster.	Caponized male bird that may show slight evidence of incomplete caponizing, otherwise conforming to the specifications for U. S. Grade B roaster.
	U. S. Grade B	U. S. Grade C	Caponized male bird that may show evidence of incomplete caponizing, otherwise conforming to the specifications for U. S. Grade C roaster.
	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade A	Young male bird showing considerable maturity, flesh slightly tough, spurs developing but soft, and otherwise conforming to the specifications for U. S. Grade A roaster.
Stags	U. S. Grade B	U. S. Grade B	Young male bird showing considerable maturity, flesh slightly tough, spurs developing but soft, and otherwise conforming to the specifications for U. S. Grade B roaster.
	U. S. Grade C	U. S. Grade C	Young male bird showing considerable maturity, flesh slightly tough, spurs developing but soft, and otherwise conforming to the specifications for U. S. Grade C roaster.
	U. S. Grade A	U. S. Grade A	Mature male bird with toughened and coarse grained flesh and otherwise conforming to the specifications for U. S. Grade A roaster.
Cocks	U. S. Grade B	U. S. Grade B	Mature male bird with toughened and coarse grained flesh and otherwise conforming to the specifications for U. S. Grade B roaster.
	U. S. Grade C	U. S. Grade C	Mature male bird with toughened and coarse grained flesh and otherwise conforming to the specifications for U. S. Grade C roaster.

Specifications for Tentative U. S. Standards for Grades for Dressed Fowl or Stewing Chickens

U. S. Grade	Quality Specifications for Individual Birds
U. S. Grade AA	Mature female bird, full-fleshed, well bled, well dressed and free of pinfeathers. No flesh or skin bruises allowed and only slight skin abrasions or discolorations permitted, none of which shall be on the breast. Crooked breast or disjointed wing above the wing tip, or a broken or disjoined leg not permitted. No torn skin permitted whether sewn or not. The crop must be empty and clean. Must be dry picked or semi-scalded and dry packed.
U. S. Grade A	Mature female bird, well fleshed, well bled, well dressed, and practically free of pinfeathers. No flesh bruises except very slight on back or wings and only very slight skin bruises, abrasions or discolorations permitted, none of which shall be on the breast. Crooked breast or other deformities not allowed. Broken wings above the wing tips, or broken legs in the flesh not permitted. Slight sewn tears permitted on the back and wings, but no sewn tears permitted on the breast or fleshy part of the carcass. Open tears not permitted. Excessive scaly leg or excessive abdominal fat not permitted. The crop must be empty and clean, but an entire crop completely and properly removed through a small incision at the back or side of the neck permitted. Must be dry picked or semi-scalded.
U. S. Grade B	Mature female bird, fairly well fleshed, fairly well dressed and fairly well bled. May show a few scattered pinfeathers over the entire carcass. Slight flesh or skin bruises, abrasions or discolorations permitted but not more than three such defects if on the breast. Abrasions over two inches in diameter not permitted and tears over two inches in diameter not allowed unless properly sewn. Dented or slightly crooked breast bone or other slight deformities permitted. One broken wing or one broken leg in the flesh permitted, if bone does not protrude through the flesh and if not showing excessive bruise or blood clot. The crop must be empty and clean, but an entire crop completely and properly removed permitted.
U. S. Grade C	Mature female bird. May be poorly fleshed, show evidence of poor bleeding and have numerous pinfeathers over the entire carcass. Abrasions and discolorations permitted. Hunchback or other deformities allowed, if the bird is fairly well fleshed. Bird badly bruised so as to make an appreciable part of the carcass inedible or birds showing evidence of disease or other condition that renders it unwholesome for human food not permitted.

Description of Terms Used in the
"Quality Specifications for Individual Birds"

- Full-Fleshed - Bird with fully developed breast, broad for its class, with thighs, back and breast well covered with fat and all bones covered with a thick layer of flesh.
- Well Fleshed - Bird with normally developed breast, with some fat covering over thighs and back and with a good covering of flesh over all bones.
- Fairly Well Fleshed - Bird with breast that may be slightly lacking in development with some evidence of fat over thighs and back and with all bones fairly well covered with flesh.
- Poorly Fleshed - Bird with narrow breast and with thighs and back showing dark from absence of fat.
- Uniform Pack and Color - Light colored and yellow birds packed separately, packages to contain either all light or all heavy breed birds; packages and paper linings uniform in size, shape, and color.
- Poorly Bled - Bird showing red pin marks on breast or thighs or skin reddened from blood clots.
- Deformities - Bird having a hunchback or other serious condition unnatural to a normal healthy bird.
- Slight Deformities - Bird with dented or notched breast, crooked back or misshapen legs or wings.
- Skin Abrasions - Reddened or bruised outer skin caused by rubbing or rough handling.
- Skin Bruise - A bruise of the skin sufficient to form a blood clot under it, but not extending into the flesh.
- Flesh Bruise - A bruise in the flesh that shows through the skin but does not move with the skin.
- Dressing Defects - Pinfeathers scattered more or less over the entire carcass; incomplete bleeding, if shown in places other than the wing tips; a cut or tear two inches or more in length, or more than one cut of any length; skin abrasions of more than two inches in diameter, or more than one abrasion of any diameter; broken leg, wing or other bone in edible part of carcass; feed in crop; dirty feet, body, or vent.

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| Slight Dressing Defects | - A few scattered pinfeathers on breast or back; blood spots in wing tips; one cut or tear less than two inches in length. |
| Well Dressed | - All conditions under "dressing defects" or "slight dressing defects" excluded, except one broken wing above the wing tip permitted in U. S. Grade A broiler or fryer, if the bone does not protrude through the flesh and if there is no appreciable bruise or blood clot, and slightly reddened wing tips may be permitted in U. S. Grade A of any class. |
| Crop Properly Removed | - The entire crop removed through a short incision of the skin at the back or side of the base of the neck and with no appreciable leakage of feed materials into the crop cavity. |
| Slight Comb or Spur Development | - Bird that has taken on the appearance of maturity; has comb growth pronounced, but not fully developed; spurs developing but soft. |
| Edible Bird | - Any bird free from disease or other condition that renders it unwholesome for human food. |
| Appreciable Part of Carcass | - An amount equal to 1/4 of the entire carcass. |

Weight Specifications for Dressed Chickens

Class	Weight Range Per Bird			Weight Range Per Dozen Birds		
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Broilers	None	1# 6 oz.	None	16#	15 oz.	15# 15 oz.
	1# 7 oz.	1# 10 oz.		21#	15 oz.	20# 15 oz.
	1# 11 oz.	2# 1 oz.		26#	15 oz.	25# 15 oz.
	2# 2 oz.	2# 8 oz.		31#	15 oz.	30# 15 oz.
	2# 9 oz.	3# 8 oz.		37#	15 oz.	36# 15 oz.
Fryers	2# 1 oz.	3# 8 oz.		42#	15 oz.	42# 15 oz.
	3# 9 oz.	3# 15 oz.		43#		47# 15 oz.
	4# 8 oz.	4# 7 oz.		48#		53# 15 oz.
	5# 8 oz.	4# 15 oz.		54#		59# 15 oz.
	5# 8 oz.	5# 7 oz.		60#		65# 15 oz.
Capons	None	5# 15 oz.	None	66#		None
	6#	6# 15 oz.		72#		71# 15 oz.
	7#	7# 15 oz.		84#		83# 15 oz.
	8#	8# 15 oz.		96#		95# 15 oz.
	9#	9# 15 oz.		108#		107# 15 oz.
Stags	10#	None		120#		119# 15 oz.
	None	2# 15 oz.	None	None		None
	3#	3# 15 oz.	36#			35# 15 oz.
	4#	4# 15 oz.	48#			47# 15 oz.
	5#	5# 15 oz.	60#			59# 15 oz.
Cocks	6#	None	72#			71# 15 oz.
	None	2# 15 oz.	None	None		None
	4#	4# 15 oz.	48#			47# 15 oz.
	5#	5# 15 oz.	60#			59# 15 oz.
	6#	None	72#			71# 15 oz.
Fowl or Stewing Chickens	None	2# 15 oz.	None	None		35# 15 oz.
	3# 8 oz.	3# 7 oz.	36#			41# 15 oz.
	4# 8 oz.	4# 7 oz.	42#			47# 15 oz.
	4# 8 oz.	4# 15 oz.	48#			53# 15 oz.
	5# 8 oz.	5# 7 oz.	54#			59# 15 oz.
	5# 8 oz.	None	60#			65# 15 oz.
			66#			None

Tentative U. S. Wholesale Grades for Dressed Chickens

U. S. Wholesale Grades for use in connection with wholesale packages of dressed chickens are as follows:

- U. S. Grade AA - A lot of dressed chickens consisting of three or more wholesale packages shall contain not less than 90% birds of the quality of U. S. Grade AA, the balance to be of the quality of U. S. Grade A and with no individual package in the lot to contain more U. S. Grade A birds than in the proportion of two to each twelve. In a lot consisting of one or two wholesale packages, the tolerances for individual packages mentioned above may apply to each package.
- U. S. Grade A - A lot of dressed chickens consisting of three or more wholesale packages shall contain not less than 90% birds of the quality of U. S. Grade A, the balance to be of the quality of U. S. Grade B and with no individual package in the lot to contain more U. S. Grade B birds than in the proportion of two to each twelve. In a lot consisting of one or two wholesale packages, the tolerances for individual packages mentioned above may apply to each package.
- U. S. Grade B - A lot of dressed chickens consisting of three or more wholesale packages shall contain not less than 90% birds of the quality of U. S. Grade B, the balance to be of the quality of U. S. Grade C and with no individual package in the lot to contain more U. S. Grade C birds than in the proportion of two to each twelve. In a lot consisting of one or two wholesale packages, the tolerances for individual packages mentioned above may apply to each package.
- U. S. Grade C - All birds shall be of the quality of U. S. Grade C or better. No birds obviously unfit for human food permitted.

General Grading Requirements

1. Any bird of the quality of U. S. Grade A or U. S. Grade B that has feed in its crop will be lowered one grade. If the crop has been properly removed, the bird may be graded into any grade except U. S. Grade AA.
2. Any bird of the quality of U. S. Grade A or U. S. Grade B from which the feathers have not been completely removed will be lowered one grade. This includes neck feathers above the head wrap, garters around the knees and fan feathers on the wing tips.
3. Any bird otherwise of the quality of U. S. Grade A or B with dirty feet will be lowered one grade.
4. Any bird otherwise of the quality of U. S. Grade A or B with dirty vent will be lowered one grade.

5. Any bird otherwise of the quality of U. S. Grade A or B with dirty or bloody head will be lowered one grade.
6. Birds with improper head wraps or head wrapping may be graded at the packing point only when the grader is certain this condition will be corrected before the birds are packed. (See "Note" page 11.)
7. An individual bird may be marked with a tag showing the proper U. S. Grade only when it has been graded by a grader authorized by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Such grade tag must show the class of chickens in addition to the U. S. Grade.
8. Individual birds may be marked with a U. S. Grade only when grade tags or labels approved by the U. S. Department of Agriculture are used and are attached to the carcass in an approved manner.
9. A package in which officially graded birds are packed may be stamped or marked with the proper U. S. Grade whether or not the individual birds in the package are labeled with a U. S. Grade.
10. All birds packed in the same package must be of the same class, grade, color and within the same weight class, except for permitted tolerances. This must not be construed to mean that the permitted tolerances shall be intentionally packed in any packages.
11. Birds shall be labeled with U. S. Grade tags only by the authorized grader who grades them or by persons under his direct supervision.
12. Each Government authorized grader must have and use a poultry thermometer for taking internal temperatures.
13. Birds shall not be graded and marked or tagged with a U. S. Grade until they have been pre-cooled to an internal temperature of at least 36° F.
14. A grading memorandum should be made out at each shipping point regardless of the size of the lot and a grading certificate issued on each carlot or less carlot shipment.
15. Where poultry which has been previously graded is regraded and shows discoloration of skin, darkening of flesh, or development of "off" condition of skin due to holding in storage; or during transit or warehousing, these characteristics shall be considered as factors of condition and not of grade. They shall not be considered in determining the grade upon regrading, but such condition factors must be noted on the grading certificate.
16. Birds that are dark or blistered or skin dried from freezing cannot be graded into the two top grades.

17. All poultry carcasses must be free of any condition as evidenced by external appearance that would render them unfit for human food.

Approved: January 7, 1943

EW Kitchen

Deputy Director
Food Distribution Administration

NOTE: Amended March 4, 1943, by the addition of the following:

Ice packed dressed poultry without head wraps may be included in the grades of U. S. Grade A, U. S. Grade B, and U. S. Grade C, provided they otherwise meet the requirements of those grades and provided that the heads have been carefully and thoroughly cleaned of blood, so that there is no appreciable soiling of dressed carcasses with which the heads may come into contact.

